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USIB-D-41.14/283
(COMOR-D-25/207)
4 March 1966
Special Limited
Distribution

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Requirement for High Resolution Photographic
Coverage of South China and North Vietnam

- REFERENCES:
- a. USIB-D-41.14/223 (COMOR-D-25/144)
5 March 1965, [redacted] 25X1
 - b. USIB-D-41.14/276 (COMOR-D-25/201)
19 January 1966, [redacted] 25X1
 - c. COMOR-D-56/66-20, 24 February 1966
 - d. USIB-D-41.14/281 (COMOR-D-25/206)
1 March 1966, [redacted] 25X1

1. The United States Intelligence Board (USIB) at its meeting on 3 March with the Deputy Director, National Reconnaissance Office (DD/NRO) in attendance, considered the memorandum on the subject by the Acting Director, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) attached to reference d. A summary of the discussion on this matter will be subsequently circulated for information as an attachment to this document.

2. Following comprehensive consideration and discussion, the USIB took the following actions which are circulated herewith for information and guidance of all concerned: 25X1D

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(1) Coverage of as many ground force installations as possible.

(2) Coverage of key lines of communications leading from South China into North Vietnam.

(3) Coverage of major complexes through which these major lines of communications pass.

b. In establishing the above priority and in reaffirming the existing intelligence requirement in references a. and b. for use of [redacted] for coverage of the South China area, the USIB noted that a combination of both of these sources would more than likely not be able to satisfy in a timely way the requirements of the JCS for intelligence on these target categories.

c. The Chairman, USIB, stated that the Board would consider at next week's meeting proposals for further actions which could help to satisfy the JCS requirements, including the use of all available resources.

3. In response to the action in 2. c. above, the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance has been requested to study and report to the Board on possible further actions to meet the JCS requirements.

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[redacted]
Executive Secretary

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Memorandum to Holders
USIB-D-41.14/283
(COMOR-D-25/207)
8 March 1966

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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR HOLDERS OF USIB-D-41.14/283

SUBJECT : Requirement for High Resolution Photographic
Coverage of South China and North Vietnam

REFERENCE : USIB-D-41.14/283 (COMOR-D-25/207)
4 March 1966, _____

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1. The following is a record of the discussion of the subject at the 3 March 1966 United States Intelligence Board (USIB) meeting which is circulated for information and should be attached to the reference document.

2. The Chairman, Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) opened the discussion of the subject by stating that with regard to the reconnaissance requirements outlined in the letter from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), his Committee has given South China and North Vietnam a high priority for the past few months and has adjusted target priorities to conform generally with that requested in DIA's letter. _____ pointed out however that, _____

3. The Deputy Director, National Reconnaissance Office (DD/NRO) _____ for coverage of South China would require policy authorization and the only other alternative would be to employ OXCART.

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(COMOR-D-25/207)
8 March 1966

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(Revised 10 March 1966)

4. Chairman Raborn stated that he wanted the Board to address two important questions: One, is the urgency sufficient to recommend to the 303 Committee authority to use U-2 aircraft to satisfy the requirement, bearing in mind the vulnerability of the aircraft and the Chinese Communist predilection to consider any United States action in South China as a possible indication of preparation for attack; and, Two, is the urgency of the requirement to establish a data base sufficient to recommend consideration of the employment of OXCART. The Chairman asked for an expression of views from each of the members on these points.

5. Mr. Hughes replied that, speaking for the State intelligence organization, he was strongly in support of [] U-2 aircraft and had repeatedly urged its use over South China. He asked whether there was any change in the survivability of the U-2. General Thomas said that with relation to the U-2, the situation is necessarily getting worse since we do not know the location of SAM sites in South China and the ChiComs are getting more experience using the MIG-21 aircraft at U-2 operating altitudes. The Chairman said that the U-2, because of its vulnerability and weather conditions in the area, is a frail reed to rely on to meet these requirements. If the need is urgent and strong enough, then consideration of the OXCART vehicle should be recommended.

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[] replied that he supported the need for the intelligence, and agreed that the OXCART vehicle provided a better chance for survival than the U-2. The Chairman then asked if the need was so important that it would warrant the use of OXCART. [] replied that if photographic reconnaissance were available it would enhance the output of NSA; but, purely on the basis of SIGINT requirements, he could not justify use of the OXCART. Looking at the broader view, however, [] said he could appreciate why the military need more precise and regular information to meet their requirements. General Davis said that the Joint Chiefs of Staff have repeatedly expressed their concern at the lack of a proper data base which would indicate whether there is a ChiCom build-up. He said that in his opinion the requirement is valid and urgent enough to

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warrant the use of all available resources. The Chairman pointed out that we have other indicators and that we must take a hard look in determining if the requirements are urgent enough to recommend utilizing any available resource. General Davis replied that he considered the requirement to be

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activities. He stated that he considered this loss to be very significant. Admiral Taylor said that he agreed that the requirement was real and present. He said that our position was vague as to what the ChiCom are doing in South China and that any means that could assure us that other indicators are reliable and correct should be utilized.

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6. The Chairman then asked

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to outline what he thought the OXCART vehicle could obtain with regard to the possible ChiCom build-up of forces in South China. replied that he would like to go back to what the JCS have asked for, which is that a data base be established to determine the status of forces in South China and North Vietnam. Good photography is the best means for obtaining this base. He believed that, with OXCART photography, weather permitting, we could see all major military encampments and structures, and whether changes occur such as the movement of forces or establishment of more bases. General Fitch then pointed out that he could probably best answer the Chairman's question as ChiCom ground forces are the principal concern. General Fitch pointed out that JCS requires a data base to establish what the situation is at this point in time against which a comparison can be made in the future of the extent and nature of a build-up. That was the purpose in requesting that

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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top priority in satellite photography be accorded to (1) coverage of as many ground force installations as possible, (2) coverage of key lines of communications leading from South China into North Vietnam, and (3) coverage of major complexes through which these major lines of communications pass. General Fitch pointed out that, from very good photography, we should be able to determine the size of garrisons and the nature of the training, how much is moving on the roads, what is the situation at choke points, what hardware is standing along the railroad sidings, the size and condition of storage areas, the size and number of training areas and new and expanded military installations. This would give us a means for noting increased activity that might be threatening to us. General Fitch said that in this connection DIA could provide a briefing for the Board on this subject. The Chairman replied that he thought this would be of interest to the whole Board.*

7. The Chairman also stated that he was trying to weigh what intelligence would be obtained vis-a-vis the nature of the reactions the ChiComs might have to increased reconnaissance efforts in South China. General Fitch noted that in March of 1965 DIA had gone on record to ask for increased coverage of South China (USIB-D-41.14/223, dated 5 March 1965) and at this time he was only asking for a change in priority of satellite photography and would like to get this approval without delay. General Fitch said that approval of this requirement would not affect essential coverage of the Soviet Union or excessively aggravate the ChiComs. Chairman Raborn agreed with this but stated that he was concerned that if the JCS requirement were valid enough we should consider how best to meet the requirement. General Fitch agreed that this broader question should be considered but preferred that it be taken up separately. [REDACTED] said that COMOR had already taken actions to meet the DIA proposal [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Chairman said that the U-2 was also not likely to meet the requirement. Therefore, if the situation is urgent, the Board should consider whether it should recommend use of the OXCART vehicle. General Fitch replied

*A DIA briefing on this subject has been scheduled for the USIB meeting on 10 March 1966.

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that he fully supported the urgent need for this type of information. The Chairman then asked if JCS had ever recorded a need for OXCART.

[redacted] replied that about ten days ago JCS had recognized the requirement for OXCART type photography for South China, but had left the decision as to the timing of its use to higher authority.* Chairman Raborn then expressed his view that it was appropriate for the intelligence community to state what actions it considered were needed to meet the JCS requirements.

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9. The Board then approved the actions circulated by USIB-D-41.14/283.

[redacted]
Executive Secretary

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*Subsequent to the USIB meeting, [redacted] provided the following precise wording of the JCS statement to the Secretary of Defense: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff support the actions necessary to provide a capability to deploy the OXCART. They recommended, however, that deployment of the OXCART be held in abeyance until a decision is made to use the aircraft over denied areas. They would support the employment of the system when the national security interests demand timeliness of intelligence or high resolution that can only be obtained by the OXCART."

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